

Building on Momentum: Summary of Parent Feedback on the Proposal for Jefferson MS

For the past four months, DCPS has been developing a plan to strengthen Ward 6 Middle Schools. We solicited parent input in a variety of ways and received a lot of important feedback. Parents communicated with us in the following ways:

- Community Meeting on April 26th (approx. 30 attended)
- Community Meeting on May 19th (approx. 40 attended)
- Multiple small group meetings with parents, including PTA and parent organization meetings
- Email correspondence and phone calls
- Survey (172 responses online and in hard copy; asked all principals to send surveys home with students)

While we have provided many different opportunities for communication, level of input has varied across school communities. This document serves as a summary of all the feedback about Jefferson received throughout this process.

The following table represents what we heard from parents as the most important factors for strengthening Jefferson:

Strong and Comprehensive Academics	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Challenging academic program for students at all levels▪ Strong special education program▪ Advanced course offerings, specifically the International Baccalaureate Program (IB)
Feeder Pattern Changes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Different middle school for Brent ES▪ Interim option while Jefferson is being renovated▪ A middle school on Capitol Hill for residents of Capitol Hill▪ Van Ness becomes an elementary school
Positive and Safe School Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Facilities that are safe and conducive to learning▪ Positive school culture that establishes discipline standards and encourages growth/creativity▪ Wrap around services to make sure that all students succeed

Critical Mass of Students on or Above Grade Level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Commitment to academic and behavioral standards for students entering Jefferson ▪ A starting position of strength for the 6th Grade Academy, with students who are ready to learn ▪ Inclusion of all in-boundary students; Jefferson should remain a neighborhood school
Meaningful Community Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Involvement of parents in planning and implementing phases ▪ Inclusion of parents from all school communities

Elements of the plan that parents liked most:

- International Baccalaureate Middle Years Program (IB-MYP)
- Plans for enhancing academics, especially the differentiated math classes and the language offerings
- The focus on finding strong leadership for the 6th Grade Academy

Parents' most common concerns:

- Jefferson's capacity to meet the needs of both advanced and below-basic students
- Jefferson's location in Southwest, not on Capitol Hill
- The modernization timeframe: would like Jefferson to be renovated sooner than 2013

Quotes from parents:

The following quotations are a sampling from the variety of comments and concerns we received:

- *"How do you ensure all students feeding in are at similar skill level, or how do you plan to ensure those needing additional support, either because they are below grade or advanced, get the help they need?"*
- *"I believe this will be a successful middle school in all aspects that are listed. There will always be room for improvements along the way. "*
- *"While the remake of Jefferson offers opportunities for positive change for an up and coming part of the city, it does not meet the immediate academic, safety or leadership needs of our rising 6th graders, and it does not meet the condition of being our neighborhood school."*
- *"The prospect of IB with strong programs and performance standards [is most compelling]."*
- *"I like the IB program and plans for Chinese offering. I have concerns about the facilities, particularly with regard to safety issues."*